

SEARCH AND SEIZURE — Inventory searches — inevitable discovery

Revised 11/2009

When police policy requires inventory searches, the inevitable discovery theory allows evidence to be admitted despite other possible search problems. In *State v. Jones*, 185 Ariz 471, 917 P.2d 200 (1996), the defendant committed multiple murders in Bullhead City. He went to Las Vegas and left his personal belongings, including the bloodstained clothes he had worn while committing the murders, at the apartment of some acquaintances. Those acquaintances saw reports of the murders, realized that Jones was the suspect referred to, called the Las Vegas police, and consented to a search of their apartment. The Las Vegas police, who did not have a warrant, impounded Jones's property, initially inventoried the property, and put it in the trunk of a police car. Bullhead City detectives then arrived and, without a warrant, searched the items the Las Vegas police had seized, finding the bloody clothes. The Las Vegas police then transported the items to the police station and conducted a lawful inventory search.

Jones argued that the warrantless search by the Bullhead City detectives was unconstitutional. The Arizona Supreme Court upheld the search under the inevitable discovery doctrine, reasoning that "The Las Vegas police inevitably would have conducted their inventory search and found defendant's clothing, regardless of whether the Bullhead City detectives identified defendant's clothing." *Id.* at 481, 917 P.2d at 210.